



**World Health
Organization**
Syrian Arab Republic

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC RESPONSE TO EARTHQUAKE

SITUATION REPORT #3
10 FEBRUARY 2023



10.1 MILLION

PEOPLE AFFECTED



4.1 MILLION

NEED IMMEDIATE
ASSISTANCE



2 MILLION

estimated
DISPLACED



4+

GOVERNORATES
AFFECTED

HEALTH CONCERNS

- TRAUMATIC INJURIES AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT are immediate health needs.
- CONTINUITY OF ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES is critical to prevent excess mortality and morbidity.
- 2 HEALTH FACILITIES reportedly damaged so far, with assessments ongoing.
- 3 PRE-EXISTING OUTBREAKS IN AFFECTED AREAS:
 - Cholera (all affected governorates, especially Aleppo)
 - Hepatitis A outbreak in coastal area
 - Measles (NES)

HIGHLIGHTS

- A 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck southern Türkiye in the early morning of 6 February 2023. Hundreds of aftershocks have occurred in the days that followed.
- In Syria, Latakia, Hama and Aleppo governorates are the worst affected areas, with further impact reported in Tartous and Deir ez-Zour.
- As of 17:00, 10 Feb, 1387 deaths and 2326 injuries are recorded in Aleppo, Latakia, Hama, and Tartous governorates, with the death toll expected to rise.
- Close to 250 shelters are set up. Water and hygiene, food, shelter, medicine, and the provision of health services are immediate priority needs.
- WHO Regional Director and WHO Regional Emergency Director are currently on mission in Syria to visit affected areas.
- More than 150 buildings have fully collapsed (~100 in Latakia, ~50 Aleppo) with hundreds more heavily damaged and uninhabitable.
- Assessment of Health facilities affected by the earthquake are being conducted by MOH and results will be shared.
- WHO submitted 15.67M US\$ in needs for health, WASH and nutrition to the upcoming Syria Flash Appeal.
- 31 health care workers lost their lives in Latakia.

SITUATION UPDATE

In the early morning of 6 February 2023, a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck southern Türkiye near the northern border of Syria. The earthquake was followed 11 minutes later by a magnitude 6.7 aftershock. Many aftershocks continue to be felt across the region. Whilst the impact is still being assessed, initial reports evidence significant damage in the areas of southern Türkiye and northern Syria.

In response, the Syria Ministry of Health (MoH) activated its Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) on 6 Feb 2023 under the chairmanship of the Deputy Minister. In all affected governorates, public and private health facilities and medical convoys have been repurposed to support the response and are being managed by the National Ministry of Health (MoH) and Directorate of Health (DoH) at governorate level. Support has been directed to affected areas, with medical convoys, including 28 ambulances and 7 mobile clinics, deployed from the health directorates of Damascus, Rural Damascus, Quneitra, Homs, Tartous, Aleppo and Latakia.

As of 11:00, 10 February 2023, **2326** injuries and **1387** deaths have been recorded in the governorates of Aleppo, Latakia, Hama, and Tartous, with additional reports expected as search and rescue efforts continue. So far, 31 health workers have reportedly died – 16 doctors and 15 pharmacists. The greatest number of injuries were reported from Aleppo, Latakia, and Hama.



Joint Intersectoral visit to shelter in Hama. Credit WHO

Due to damaged buildings, and the fear to return to residences, thousands of families have been displaced with people sheltering in vehicles, in public parks, mosques, schools, and other community centres. Nearly 250 IDP shelters have been set up, mainly in Aleppo and Latakia. Priority response actions include distribution of life-saving and essential supplies and services such as health care, water and hygiene, shelter and protection.

Currently, a joint needs assessment is being conducted to better understand the full extent of the impact and needs. WHO conducted a grading call on 7 February 2023, with the event graded at the highest level of Grade 3.

Area Impact

Latakia and Tartous

Governorate	Deaths	Injuries
Latakia	614	934
Tartous	0	36

- In Latakia, 57 buildings have collapsed, 200 partially destroyed, 16 schools partially damaged.
- 142,000 people are rendered homeless and 33,000 are living in collective shelters.
- At least 4 hospitals reported damage with at least 1 CT scanner fully destroyed. Assessments are ongoing.
- New trauma and injury cases are no longer arriving at area hospitals.
- 5 PHCs were evacuated due to the buildings rendered unsafe.
- Residents are afraid to return home; ~50 shelters are set up in mosques and schools.
- Priority needs include mobile medical outreach and MHPSS support.



Regional Director EMRO with earthquake victim Credit: WHO

Aleppo

Deaths	Injuries
451	714

- Aleppo PiN: 1.3M (intersectoral)
- Aleppo government to establish 173 common shelters for up to 12,640 families.
- 54 (1 new) buildings collapsed.
- Mobile medical teams have provided 4168 consultations and 557 MHPSS services in collective shelters.

Hama:

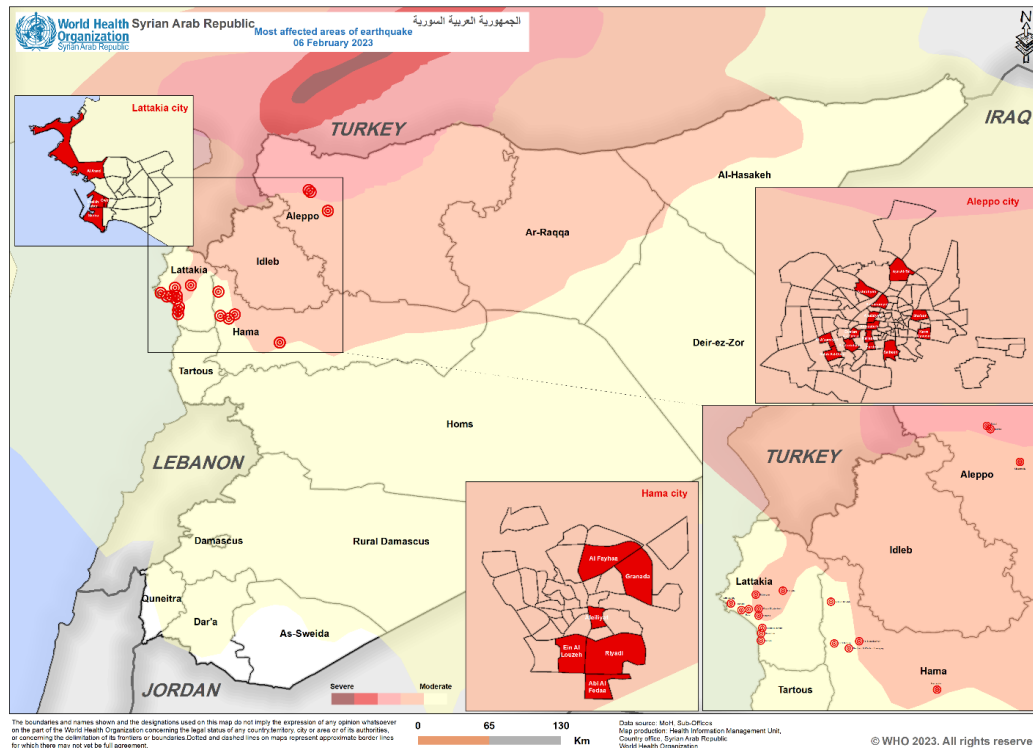
Deaths	Injuries
51	75

- Joint intersectoral assessment missions were conducted in
 - Ein Alkroom North Hama: 1 building destroyed (3 dead)
 - Salhab town: 1 shelter accommodating 28 families
 - Hama: 8 families housed from Al Arbaern area where one building had collapsed
- Medical supplies from Damascus hub were immediately sent to Hama National Hospital.

Deir ez-Zour

Deaths	Injuries
0	1

- 6 buildings collapsed in Deir ez-Zour in Jubila (2) – Al Rushdiah (2) – Al Hamydia (1) – Umal (1).
- More than 600 families are reportedly displaced from their homes due to damages while an additional 68 families were forcibly evacuated due to unsafe buildings.
- Casualties – Al Assad Hospital: 1 case was admitted with mild trauma injuries.
- No injuries reported.



Public Health Impact

- Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, paid a visit to governorates in Syria and explained the effects of earthquakes.
- Immediately following the earthquake, trauma-related deaths and injuries from collapsed building and debris were reported.

- Within the affected areas, the number of trauma and injury cases have declined following a tremendous surge in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. Additional needs related to plastic and orthopaedic surgery, as well as provision of physical rehabilitation, prosthetics and assistive devices are expected.
- Prior to the earthquake, 1120 public health facilities were included in quarterly HeRAMS, of which only 28 public hospitals and 540 primary health centres (PHCs) were fully functional and 15 public health hospitals and 80 PHCs were partially functional. Assessments are ongoing to determine extent of damage on facilities.
- Persons exposed to harsh weather as a result of displacement and/or damage to their accommodation are at high risk for hypothermia. With thousands of people displaced and cold weather conditions, shelter needs are top priority at this time.
- Due to crowded conditions in existing shelters, there is heightened risk of outbreaks and disease transmission, including spread of respiratory illness such as COVID-19 and influenza, as well as those related to pre-existing outbreaks of cholera, hepatitis A and measles.
- Mental health support is a priority need due to the extreme trauma and stress resulting from the earthquake on affected populations, experienced by children, as well as the response workforce.
- Significant damage to the water networks has been reported to above-ground infrastructure with dozens of tanks reportedly collapsed or fully damaged; WASH assessments continue. Turbidity, contamination, and reduced functionality have been reported, and as such there is anticipated higher risk of waterborne illness, including exacerbation of pre-existing cholera and hepatitis A outbreaks.



Aleppo team with earthquake victims. Credit: WHO

RESPONSE PILLARS

Leadership and Coordination

- The emergency health response is being led by the MoH and DoH at governorate level, and the Emergency Operations Center has been fully activated at the MoH.
- On 7 February 2023, World Health Organization (WHO) co-chaired the first humanitarian health sector meeting within 24 hours of the earthquake and is co-leading the health sector with the MoH.
- WHO has activated a full-scale incident management response, activating all pillars under the global Emergency Response Framework.
- On 8 February 2023, WHO Regional Director Dr. Ahmed Al Mandhari and Regional Emergency Director Dr. Richard Brennan arrived in Damascus.
- WHO is currently formulating a regional earthquake flash appeal for Syria and Türkiye and has also submitted its needs to the OCHA Whole of Syria flash appeal.
- WHO is deploying technical and operational surge support to bolster earthquake response capacity (3 already in country).

Information Management and Surveillance

- Official casualty figures are being reported by national MoH.
- WHO is closely coordinating with surveillance teams and rapid response teams to ensure ongoing surveillance and detection, as well as readiness for any surge in infectious disease cases, especially in affected areas.
- Support to rapid response teams (RRTs) has been requested from Tartous and Hama.

Procurement and Logistics

- In response to MoH and DoH requests for additional medical supplies and equipment, WHO has mobilized immediate essential supplies to the affected areas while also initiating procurement from local and global sources.
- Within the first 24 hours of the response, WHO dispatched essential medicines and supplies to Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Tartous and Latakia, in addition to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). Supplies provided 102,415 treatments for 300 trauma cases, in addition to 550,00 water disinfection tablets.

- On 7 February 2023, surgical and trauma kits weighing 0.6 tons were delivered to Aleppo DoH.
- In Hama, WHO dispatched a cholera periphery kit, oxygen masks and an oxygen cannula (650 kg).
- A WHO chartered flight is scheduled to reach Aleppo -- ETA to be confirmed -- bringing in trauma and emergency surgical kits (a total of 138 pallets, 178 cubic meters). This shipment will be followed by a second flight (74 pallets, 102 cubic meters) bringing trauma kits, body bags, and instruments.
- NCDs treatments – including hemodialysis sessions, which are also vital for treatment of crush injuries – are in the pipeline for procurement, to support continuation of essential services to affected populations.

Health Operations and Technical Expertise

- **Trauma:** Rapid assessments of the public hospitals began in Aleppo and Latakia. Technical support provided to medical teams receiving trauma patients. A 3-months trauma plan has been drafted. Shipment of IPC supplies have been prepositioned in DOH and hospitals while others are in pipeline.
- **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS):** WHO is focused firstly on support staff and their families in this challenging time. In its coordination role for the MHPSS working group, WHO is mobilizing local stakeholders and sectors, including MoH, NGOs, as well as child protection services, to provide MHPSS support to affected communities. The MoH and Ministry of Education MHPSS personnel trained on Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Basic Psychosocial Skills (BPS) are forming quick response teams in the affected areas. As of 8 February, 72 PHCs in the affected governorates (Hama 8, Latakia 14, Tartous 20, Aleppo 19, Deir Ez-Zour 5, Homs 6) are providing integrated MHPSS services.
- **Surveillance and Outbreaks:** EWARS system is functioning at the affected areas for early detection of threats related to infectious diseases with a total of 237 reporting sites at the affected sub-districts. WHO is working with MOH and DOH counterparts to assess the needs for strengthening disease surveillance in the affected governorates. RRTs will be supported with chlorine tablets, DOHs will be supported with rapid diagnostic kits for cholera and COVID-19, as well as medicines for treatment of acute diarrhea including IV fluids, antibiotics, ORS. Thirty-five RRTs are currently in the affected areas: 12 in Aleppo, 8 in Hama, 7 in Latakia, 8 in Tartous.
- **WASH:** In addition to the dispatch of water disinfection tablets and brochures, WHO is working with focal points on the ground to monitor water quality and prepare for impacts on water infrastructure. Approximately 550,000 water disinfection tablets were deployed to affected areas.
- **Essential Health Services:** Four NGOs have been engaged in Aleppo to provide medical services during the response with further deployments planned to affected areas in the coming days.
- **Risk Communication and Community Engagement:** WHO has undertaken daily digital social listening to detect emerging issues and concerns. Major conversation trends and topics emerging include: calls to increase aid and support to Syrian affected populations; reports of search and rescue volunteers found dead in the rubble during searches; fears of returning home and preferring to stay in shelters or in public settings. A coordination meeting was held with RCCE partners to coordinate efforts for collective outreach and communications to affected populations. WHO is developing key messages across a range of immediate and longer-term health risks pending testing and approval. An integrated community health responder training package addressing multiple health risks is under development. Community feedback mechanism also currently under development.



Mobile clinic in Aleppo. Credit: WHO

CHALLENGES

- Limited hospital capacities (human and health resources) to address mass casualties.
- Dynamic and evolving situation on the ground.
- High risk of:
 - Spread of water- and food-borne diseases due to disrupted water supplies, including exacerbation of ongoing cholera and Hepatitis A (pre-existing outbreaks).
 - Disease transmission in crowded shelter conditions, including respiratory illness, measles (pre-existing outbreak).

- Significant mental distress and disorders, especially among children.
- Harsh winter weather and extreme cold temperatures complicate search and rescue efforts, as well as shelter solutions.
- Significant distress and fear within the affected population, with households not returning to residences. Likelihood of rumors and misinformation increasing as situation evolves.
- Ongoing fuel crisis has hindered response efforts.

PRIORITY NEEDS AND ACTIONS

- **New resources are urgently needed** to accelerate flow of aid and assistance to affected areas.
- Unhindered access to most affected populations.
- Facilitated entry and distribution of medicines, supplies, equipment, and surge support staff.
- Continuity of health care services, especially for women, children, the elderly, persons with NCDs.
- Ensured access to MHPSS for the affected population, particularly children.
- Fuel for response to enable ambulance transport, search and rescue, MMTs, community outreach, etc.
- Support to partners, in particular NGOs providing immediate services, to ensure supply of sufficient safe water and continuation of essential health services.

FUNDING NEEDS FOR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

For the first 3 months, WHO estimates it will require 15.67 million US\$ for immediate response needs in Syria. Further resources will be required to support repair and rehabilitation of affected health facilities which have yet to be assessed, as well as respond to anticipated outbreaks and the longer-term health needs of those affected by the crisis.

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To support WHO's response in SYRIA, please visit:

<https://earthquakeresponse-turkiyesyria.who.foundation/>

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